

March 19, 1999

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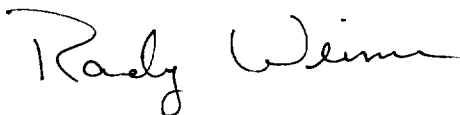
Dear FDA:

If the average person decided to withhold food from their dog or cat for days or weeks, that person would probably be charged with cruelty to animals and the media would take the story and run with it. Yet, each year the egg industry intentionally deprives millions of hens of all food for up to 14 days.

The U.S. egg industry force molts - intentionally starves - entire flocks to manipulate their metabolism, forcing exhausted hens to produce a few hundred more eggs before going to slaughter. During the forced molt, hungry hens peck desperately at empty metal food trays. They are driven to pluck and eat each others' feathers to obtain nutrients. Denuded of feathers and deranged by fear, they lose up to 35% of their body weight. Countless hens die from the stress.

Forced molting is so stressful it increased bone breakage and impairs the hens' immune system, predisposing the birds and their eggs to Salmonella infection. Forced molting of hens used in egg production is cruel to the birds and increases the spread of Salmonella enteritidis infection. **Please grant the petition, filed under docket #98P-0203/CP, that would eliminate this practice.**

Respectfully Submitted,



Randy Weimer  
Winnemucca, Nevada

98P-0203

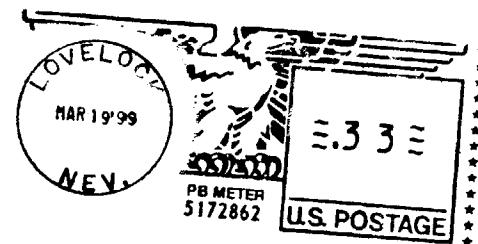
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